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NATIONAL POLITICS.

SPEECH

OF

HON. LEMUEL D. EVANS, OF TEXAS,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 13, 1856.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. EVANS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is not my wish or design on the present occasion to attempt a discussion *in extenso* of any particular proposition now mooted before the National Legislature; but rather to enter my earnest, yet respectful protest against the agitation of those unnecessary and mischievous issues which the special pleaders of party have prepared with so much ingenuity, and which they are endeavoring with such an excess of perverse zeal to force upon the attention of Congress and the country, while interests of the highest moment, and demanding immediate action, continue to be neglected or ignored altogether.

The time has been when this great theater of free debate witnessed a far different spectacle. History has preserved the days and noted the very hours when these walls were consecrated by the services of immortal genius dealing with mighty measures of universal, because of national concern. But no one can pretend that it is so now. Instead of profound argument, or impassioned eloquence on the great principles of our Government, and the practical policy of its administration, you hear nothing save abstract disquisitions on the theory of public or private morals; or inquiries as to the comparative values of free and servile labor; or worse still, fierce assaults and unseemly recriminations bandied about between opposing factions, as these stand defined on the nation's map, by the paltry and unpatriotic marks of mere geographical boundaries, as if intelligence and virtue were indigenous to given localities.

But if you turn from this unpleasant picture to seek relief in the wisdom of parties, what is left of all their boasted science and art, save the cunning of strategetics? Instead of measures, or even men, you behold maneuvers—dexterity without strength, and vehemence without vigor—a scheme of policy that begins and ends with the philosophy of excitement, and whose sole instrument is endless agitation.

It must not, however, be too hastily concluded, either that the patriotic spirit of the country has suffered a general decline and deterioration, or that the race of giant intellects has become utterly extinct. An inference so painfully humiliating does not necessarily follow from the facts. Indeed, it cannot be doubted—I will not allow myself to doubt, that the hearts of the people glow with as warm and healthy a love for the institutions of their native land, as ever; while the splendid discoveries in science, and the progress in literature and the arts, prove incontestably that neither the speculative nor practical faculties of American thinkers in the present generation have decayed in energy or diminished in effort.

But if this be so, upon what rational principles shall we strive to account for the extraordinary intellectual barrenness of powerful thought and comprehensive policy which you perceive everywhere in the halls of legislation, and other departments of the Government, as well as in all the evolutions of opposing factions? Now, to my mind, the explanation seems as obvious as it is easy. The formal tactics, the vigorous drill and discipline of the professional politicians, organized into a sort of unholy hierarchy in regular subordination to despotic leaders, have, at the same time, cramped and fettered the free genius of all our great statesmen, and disfranchised the sovereign citizens of their constitutional rights. Everything—talents, fame, honor, conscience—has become subservient to the interests of party, and must bow at the bidding of its chosen chiefs. What space can be found for the spontaneous development of exalted intellect; what opportunity for the generous impulses of honest patriotism, in the crushing confinement of such a tyrannical *régime?* Behold, also, the apex of absurdity. The self-assumed high priests and oracles of faction demand from all an unconditional surrender, an absolute submission to the authority of party, in the name of party, and for the sake of party. But what is party, in the genuine and noble acceptation of the term? It can be nothing more than the incarnate symbol, the living, actual embodiment of great national ideas and positive practical ends, with a view to their

realization in the operations of Government. In other words, there can be no party without a policy. The inference is irresistible: as ideas and aims constitute the soul of parties, when the former have been either executed or abandoned, the latter are already dead beyond even the possibility of resurrection, and should be at once dissolved. And such is the exact condition of all our present political organizations, as I will show more fully in the sequel. They are destitute of any specific differences, other than factional attributes, to distinguish them in real classification from each other; and their very names are mere unmeaning echoes from the mighty voices of the past.

A brief analysis of the most prominent facts in the history of national politics will explain how the natural result which I have just indicated has been accomplished; and may serve also as the guiding light for the inauguration of a future policy. In the first place, at the very foundation of our Government, as the main pillar and corner-stone of the structure, we discover the great idea of political liberty. But the particular character, and the primary nationality of the chiefs and fathers of the Revolution, and the specific notions necessarily implied in their minds by the term liberty, must never be forgotten by any who would correctly interpret the formulas of their language, as preserved in the undying records of those glorious historic days. The heroes and patriots of that age were Englishmen; all their education, ideas and institutions were English, and nothing more. Every resolution of theirs in Convention and Congress—every earnest petition which they laid at the foot of the throne—all their speeches, pamphlets, and newspapers—asserted or demanded English liberty, and that only. It was the object of their combat, and the precious prize of their conquest.

Having achieved their independence, it remained for them to organize the supreme national powers into a system of civil and political unity, for the conservation and security of their newly acquired freedom; and in the performance of this wonderful work—wonderful almost as the creation of a world—every student of history knows how largely they borrowed from the model of the English constitution; for their ideal still went no farther than the perfection of English liberty.

Some theorists, it is true, vainly suppose, or, at least, talk as if they imagined, that the men of the Revolution framed this Government, not for their own happiness and the hopes of their children, but to realize the airy dream of universal philanthropy, or the no less idle and impossible abstraction of universal equality; and these sophists have endeavored to base their absurd hypothesis on the great charter of our national freedom, by wresting a few isolated phrases from all harmony of interpretation, both with the subject-matter and the context. It must be evident, however, to all impartial persons, who are even competent to think on such topics, that the liberty and equality predicated in that sacred instrument must have related exclusively to the sovereign citizens of the United States—to the people of the race that alone were parties to the compact, nd to no others. Those sages and philosophers did not meet in solemn deliberation to prepare a constitution for Africa or India; but in their own express language, for "themselves and their posterity." Consider the occasion; and can it be assumed, without the tacit perpetration of a libel against their wisdom, that minds at once so profoundly philosophical and eminently practical, would so far depart from the immediate and proper business before them, as to diverge and travel off into the far fields of psychology or comparative physiology, to affirm the natural equality of all the Hottentots in the deserts of the burning zone, of all the root-digging savages in the dells of the Rocky Mountains, of every barbarous being that wears the human shape, with themselves, with Washington, Hamilton, and Franklin? For whether the ethnological dogma be a sober fact or a ridiculous fiction, that was neither the time nor the place for its assertion. And, besides, the proposition itself is so supremely preposterous, that it may well be doubted whether any sane mind, fully comprehending the terms, ever yet truly believed it. The word *equality* is synonymous with *exact resemblance*, and can never be applied without violent absurdity, to things in which the difference or contrast predominates over the likeness. As well might you state an algebraic equation between the numerals one and one thousand, as between the inferior colored races and those which stand at the climax in the ascending scale of civilization.

Returning, however, to the condition of social and civil institutions at the origin of American political history, you see almost everywhere the local laws of the several States deeply marked and strongly tinctured with the colors of British aristocracy, with the insolent rights of primogeniture, the powerful tyranny of entails, and the arbitrary mechanism of organized monopolies; while even public opinion, under the guidance of some illustrious leaders, evinced a perverse tendency of reaction towards ancient forms. But precisely when the danger to liberty was becoming most imminent, a beneficent Providence raised up and brought forward on the stage of our national drama, the greatest political philosopher that ever lived in any epoch or country—that truly wonderful genius, that matchless mind, so potent in the faculty of comprehensive generalization, so patient and thoroughly searching in analysis, and so dexterous in dealing with the perplexities of details, that the emanations of his thought seemed almost the effects of inspiration, and his sentences sounded like oracles of superhuman wisdom. And if first of all, and incomparably above all, Washington stands exalted as the Father and temporal savior of the Republic, Jefferson is fairly entitled to the praise of being the genuine parent and chief apostle of the Democratic party—that party which was based on the idea of equal sovereignty distributed among all the citizens of the Union without distinction. He declared a war of extermination against everything that opposed this grand conception—against primogeniture, entails, monopolies, and all the impudent pretensions of oligarchy, in whatsoever form the few might seek to impose subjection on the many. Fearing not to trust the intelligence of the people, he called the masses to his standard, and by the aid of their irresistible alliance routed the friends and admirers of English aristocracy—the advocates of gentle birth and classical education as the only doors to the dignities of place and power.

Such was the inauguration and primary victory of the Democratic idea.

But, to achieve this splendid triumph, Thomas Jefferson had to contend with fearful odds, with all the learning, and prejudice, with the pensioned talents, the party drill, and cunning tactics of his day. He had nothing but his grand army of peasantry to vanquish the hosts of cavaliers, the mailed knights of monopoly and privilege, the flower and *Elite* of the self-assumed higher classes. And this fact alone explains the immense popularity and extraordinary vigor of his Administration. The very humblest man of his party felt the proud consciousness that his own arm had assisted in the glorious combat, and that he himself shared a portion of the luster which beamed around the brow of his conquering chieftain. A President, to command real power for administrative functions, must be strong in public opinion, and in close, as it were, magnetic sympathy with the common sentiments and even passions of the people. He must feel that the crust of the earth is solid granite beneath his feet before he can venture to take steps which may shake the poles. But the sage of Democracy well kpew the all-enduring firmness of the ground on which he stood, and hence resulted the boldness of his measures and the energy of their execution. And in this respect he has had no equal since, with the single exception of General Jackson, who indeed occupied precisely the same position. For both these great men owed their measureless popularity to the harmony of their intuitions and ideas with the feelings and opinions of the people. Almost without advisers, they were, so to speak, both their own Cabinets, and consequently without discord in deliberation or imbecility in action; and the similar effect for each has been a universal and imperishable fame. If you travel into the remote woods of the far West, or wander among the sequestered valleys of distant mountains, you may find whole neighborhoods that never so much as heard of some Presidents; but roam where you will, everywhere and anywhere, at the sources of the Mississippi, and by the sands of the Mexican gulf, with the hunters of the wide prairies and the trappers of the northern Cordilleras, the names of Jefferson and Jackson are still uttered as household words, and repeated forever as magical forms of incantation by the lips of Democrats throughout the world.

The struggle, however, between the antagonistic parties and principles did not terminate with the brilliant triumph of Jefferson. But from that day until the present hour, the Democratic idea has steadily gained ground, so that now the sovereign equality of all citizens is recognized in theory, at least, by all classes, and even by the most opposite schools of statesmen.

Nevertheless, the ingenuity of the professional politicians is as great as their appetite for power shows itself insatiable; and at a very early period, when aristocracy had already suffered an irrevocable decline in opinion, they contrived a sinister scheme to restore its domination in another shape. And, indeed, one might almost say, that if the very prince of all evil had himself inspired them, these political traitors against freedom could not possibly have imagined a more effectual method for the consummation of their object than the old *caucus* system of effecting nominations for the presidency, by the combinations and intrigues of the members of Congress. This plan for the disfranchisement of the people soon grew to be an intolerable grievance, and turned the Government into an arrogant oligarchy, which continued the usurpation until General Jackson crushed all its machinery into atoms, beneath the weight of his immense and resistless popularity.

But the despotism of the caucus being swept away and literally consumed in the fires of general indignation, the phœnix of conventions, that other bird of still more evil omen, quickly arose from its ashes, under the cunning and baleful tyranny of this new and irresponsible power: the spirit of oligarchy has become incarnate in a more detestable form, and has reduced all the political rights and influence of the people to the paltry alternative of a selection between two rival candidates, the nominees of the opposing conventions.

It will be urged, I am well aware, that the high authority of General Jackson has approved by an explicit sanction this odious system of conventions. But it must be remembered, that he did so only under the safe limitation and positive proviso, "that the delegates should come fresh from the people." And I ask you, sir, if that absolute and necessary condition is fulfilled in the present practice of any political organization? Do the delegates come into convention *fresh* from the people?—do they even come from *the* people at all? Every intelligent man in the United States knows the fact to be far otherwise. We have all seen how these things are managed. In what manner are the first delegates elected in the villages of the rural districts? Every county of every State in the whole Republic can bear witness that these pretended representatives of popular opinion, of the worth and wisdom of this great nation, are in fact chosen by a few professional politicians, office-holders, or expectants of office, with their little circle of satellites, the bullies of the bar-room, and other species of that large and politically influential genus vulgarly denominated loafers!

But if you turn from such disgraceful scenes for solace to the populous towns, the case is worse still; and worst of all in the great capitals of commerce; for there the clamorous confusion of the primary meetings baffles all the powers of description by either pen or pencil; and the paid prize-fighters of faction, the butcher boys, and braves of fancy, have it all their own way.

"Delegates fresh from the people!" And who are the people? Surely not such specimens as these. No, sir. While the pettifogger and drilled politician stand brawling over the names of their favorites you will find the real people, the power and pride of their country, at home: the mechanic with his tools, the farmer behind his plow, the merchant beside his ledger, the physician with his patients, the clergyman at his desk. For none of the truly sovereign classes employed in the production or distribution of material, intellectual or moral wealth, have either the time or the taste for the low intrigues and stormy agitation of such assemblies, which are therefore left to the supervision of the political loafers, without control or a shadow of responsibility.

I think it may be safely assumed that, out of the three or four millions of voters in the United States, not one man in the thousand has anything to do, even by indirection, with the choice of delegates to any convention. What a strange phenomenon is this in the practice of a free Government! Will the historian of future ages, or the Democrat of distant generations, be able to credit the monstrous fact, that such a system of utter and unrelieved aristocracy was permitted to grow up and flourish in the bosom of an enlightened republic?

The annals of the world prove, beyond all controversy, that the right of nomination monopolizes to itself all other power, and is in fact supreme. And it is clear almost as a mathematical axiom, and demonstrated by all experience, that no man can receive a presidential nomination except by intriguing with the very persons who are destined to be the members of his Cabinet, or the ministers to represent his government at foreign courts. Hence, in the nature of things, the necessary result must be a nomination, not upon principle, or national policy, or even individual merit, but under the motive influence of self-interest, in a manner as corrupting to the nominee as to the electors. And thus, on the unhallowed altar of patronage and the spoils of office, public morality and political integrity are habitually sacrificed in every caucus and convention; for such is the inevitable consequence of that dangerous and demoralizing system.

A famous sceptical philosopher has maliciously defined Democracy to be "a government by demagogues." But if Hobbes had flourished at this day, he might, with a fine show of reason, have characterized the aristocracy of conventions as a government of political loafers. It is even more baneful than the old exploded plan of the despotic caucus. For the members of Congress, who by that means effected presidential nominations, must have felt some sense of responsibility to the people, as the tenure of their offices depended upon the popular will. It is not so with the delegates. They owe allegiance to no power save party, and have neither hope nor fear but in the future smiles or frowns of the coming Administration.

And what, sir, have been the practical consequences of this unnatural and insolent tyranny? It has ostracised all our greatest statesmen, so that now the only certain passport to the highest position of honor and trust is the possession of a prudent mediocrity. Such is the universal testimony and indignant complaint of the whole country. Eminent services, brilliant eloquence, varied learning, far-sighted policy, a world-wide fame, are all so many insurmountable obstacles in the path of promotion which leads to the President's chair; for to be known to the people is to be ignored by the convention. As the only legitimate highways to exalted station have been thus effectually barred, politicians are led by a moral necessity to seek out the crooked and corrupt avenues of party intrigue and conspiracy. Refusing to accept the great practical issues made up by the wants and wishes of the age, they undertake, with all the subtile ingenuity of special pleaders, to prepare fictitious cases for the political jury of the country—cases which have no other tendency or object than the perpetuity of agitation. They call their convention, construct their platform, and designate their nominees, who are nothing more than the mere John Does in this process of political ejectment, designed to secure the use and possession of three hundred millions of public money. Then, all the orators and organs of party come forward as suitors, or as witnesses, to reëcho the clamorous cries of their leaders, and the career of excitement is fairly inaugurated.

In the mean time, all other questions, however important or pressing, must remain in abeyance; or, as the old lawyers would say, *in nubibus*, while the prosecution continues pending for the golden keys of patronage and power. Even to name any other subject as worthy of attention will be not only deemed rank treason against the sovereign majesty of party, but also unpurged contempt against the high court of caucus. The spectacle is painful as well as revolting in the extreme; to behold every principle of improvement—every plan of progress, trampled wildly and wickedly in the dust, until it shall receive the label and indorsement of some authoritative convention; to see statesmen of eminent talents, both in and out of Congress, employing all their splendid faculties in the barbarous enterprise of crushing to the earth every new movement not originated by themselves; to see all our political journalists dipping their pens in gall and poison to blacken the fame and blight the influence of every dissenter from the faith of faction, whose cup of communion is the conspiracy of the caucus; to know that the administrator of a great Government—a successor of the three immortals, Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson—habitually brings to bear the full weight of three hundred millions of gold, to overwhelm and bury, as beneath a metallic mountain, every high and holy aspiration of the popular heart intensely yearning for the ideal of social perfection, the very instant when it assumes an organized shape, or becomes capable of political recognition. The sight is still more sorrowful, unspeakably more humiliating, to witness a President of the Union—a chief, not of sections, but of the nation—with his army of officials, and even the ministers of his Cabinet, entering warmly into the canvass of a local election, and levying the most odious species of black mail, in the form of contributions from all his subordinates, to exterminate the freedom of opinion in a sovereign State, as the means of sustaining his party, and to perpetuate his power for the next succession. It is equally degrading to see the first Magistrate of the greatest Government on the globe condescending to become a spy on the free movements of innocent citizens—a common informer against them in the courts of despotism—infringing their constitutional as well as natural rights of voluntary emigration—even the physical right of unrestrained locomotion—arresting their steps by mendacious prosecutions, on the ridiculous pretext that they were going to make war on Nicaragua, when it was notorious to all the world that they would go as friends, and at the special instance and request of the only political power in Nicaragua.

But all this effrontery, folly, and political crime, are the natural fruits of that one poisonous tree, the deadly Upas of the caucus and convention; and, therefore, do I protest against it. I protest against the system as a whole and in all its parts;

against its causes and its consequents, as being alike death to the hopes of genius, and destruction to the rights of every free citizen. In the names of the great ones now no more, whom it crucified while living; in behalf of the illustrious men who tremble before its power to-day on the verge of political exile; in favor of the future benefactors of the country that it will surely ostracise; for the sake of all morality, liberty, and law; by the sacred Democratic idea of the sovereign and supreme equality of all American citizens; by the franchises of the millions usurped in the hands of the few; by the activities of commerce, the interests of science, the claims of religion, the demands of progress, the spirit of the age; by the Constitution and the national independence, and by all the bountiful blood and beautiful lives with which they were bought; and by the voice of the blood of our brothers crying from the ground of Panama and Nicaragua—I protest against and defy the aristocracy of the new line of despots—the cruel kings of the caucus and convention.

But the practical question is embarrassed with extreme difficulties, when one would inquire as to the remedy for such monstrous evils. The obvious answer is to abandon the system altogether. This, however, the professional politicians will never consent to do of their own free accord, as it would be a surrender of the powers and dignities which they have usurped. And, therefore, for some indefinite period of time, the oppressive machinery of parties will probably continue to work on in the same old way, growing ever more and more tyrannical and mischievous, so as at last to become unendurable, when the aroused majesty of the people will break forth in their might, and shiver the whole abhorred structure, as with the fall of a thunderbolt. If Providence, in mercy, should ever again grant us another truly great man, one of the giant race, like Thomas Jefferson or General Jackson, he would grind this infamous sham of loafer oligarchy into powder, and all the brood of political vipers that nestle in its bosom, with one single crush of his iron boot-heel. And hence the universal cry from one end of the country to the other, "We want another General Jackson!"

The scheme of conventions can urge only the solitary argument in justification of its assumptions, that such a rigorous *régime* is necessary to give concentrated strength and unity to the operations of parties; but, as I have previously indicated, there are really no parties now existing in the true sense of the term. All the principal issues have been for ever adjudicated in accordance with the original Democratic idea as expounded by Jefferson. We hear not a whispered syllable any more of high tariffs, free trade, or national banks. No such timbers can be found in recent platforms. The only ostensible party organization that can offer any sort of pretension to respectable antiquity is the self-assumed Democratic party; but, as I have just said, its principles are common to all the other factions, and, therefore, cannot serve as the basis of a separate and distinct classification.

I do not know any better method of illustrating the precise views which I entertain on this subject, than by a brief reference to the facts of my own private political history. In the primary import of the word, I have been a Democrat from the days of my earliest youth; I am so still, and shall always be so. From the year of my majority I have been in all the great battles of the American Democracy for supremacy, and there has not been a monument raised to commemorate its victories, at which I cannot point, and say of some pebble in the proud column, "that, too, was contributed by my hand." But I find it utterly impossible to act with the present administration of the Democratic party. I will not bow down in the dust and offer my conscience and my country as sacrifices to the murderous Moloch of conventions.

But no reflecting mind can fail to perceive the immense difference between the genuine Democracy, distinguished by the attributes and actions which I have just enumerated, and the retrograde faction that now pretends an exclusive title to the name. Day and darkness are scarcely more strongly contrasted. If, however, all the other opposing evidence were wanting, the so-called Democratic organization in this House would falsify their assumption of identity with the school of Jefferson and Jackson. You behold here, among them, some fifteen or more Whigs, five or more Free-Soilers, as many members of the American order, and some twenty-five or thirty belonging to the wing of Southern Rights, thus leaving less than a third of the whole number who were Democrats of the old line. And this fact shows conclusively the dissolution of the original party.

It cannot be doubted that, if there be any political organization at all among the masses, it is thoroughly Democratic; but I must pronounce it an absurdity to suppose that the Democratic rank and file of the great army of progress are officered and commanded by their ancient enemies—by Whigs, Free-Soilers, Abolitionists, Nullifiers, Know Nothings, and Secessionists. Indeed, the coalition of all these hostile and heterogeneous elements, under the popular euphonious appellation of Democracy, cannot present a principle, not even a single political dogma, in common; but all the time the appeal has been: "Stand by the South—stand as one man, and show an undivided front in opposition to the dark banner of Black Republicanism." Such was the sole tie of brotherhood that bound together "the immortal seventy-four." No, sir, not a solitary principle of political doctrine has been announced by them, nor will there be until after the first Monday in June, when the Cincinnati convention will furnish a platform. Until then, they dare not, as a party, present a single issue, or affirm one political proposition

Recurring now to the Republican school, they too appeal to party organization, to act as a unit: not for the purpose of carrying out some great measure of national politics; not to advance the interests, and promote the general welfare of our common country—no, sir; their cry also is sectional: "Stand by your arms—stand firm and united to wage a relentless war upon the slave power of the South." Such is the purely sectional strife fast consuming the vital energies of this youthful Republic; and under these circumstances I deem it my duty to enter my solemn protest against those political organizations which spring from party conventions.

It is to be noticed as a remarkable phenomenon in the Republican platform, that it presents but a single plank, and that is altogether theoretical —the isolated idea of opposition to slavery. Nor can they resist the force of this fatal objection by raising the wild shout of "Freedom for Kansas," because that question is already virtually settled, since the statesmen of all sects are now agreed to let the sovereign citizens of the Territories choose their own institutions.

But the most startling feature in the Republican movement is its manifest tendency towards a dissolution of the Union. I do not now allude to any sudden and violent disruption, a catastrophe which shall mark the lines of the different States with blood, by plunging the country into the horrors of civil war, although such an event is no distant or imaginary probability. I refer to a natural and inevitable danger—to the pernicious fruits which all this agitation must necessarily bear in the next generation. The whole series of facts in the present age, according to an eternal law of social dynamics, will coöperate as causes to produce the phenomena of the age that shall immediately succeed us. Now, sir, it requires no spirit of prophecy to predict what must be the consequences of all this sectional discord and bitter hostility on the opinions and passions of our children. The press, the platform, and even the pulpit, are all busily engaged in brewing the storm which will, one day, roll its thunders over every mountain and valley in the land, and shatter the fair fabric of our free institutions into atoms, unless some scheme can be devised to remove these active and powerful causes of decay and disintegration. For it is a fundamental axiom of political statics, that no society can hold together as a durable unity without a vital and vigorous spirit of nationality. There must be a feeling of common interest among all those who live under the same government. No considerable part of the community must regard themselves as foreigners or enemies with respect to another part. But the slavery agitation ignores these high scientific and social laws, as if it were in reality the express and deliberate object of parties to destroy the Constitution.

The excitement operates also in another equally fatal manner to effect the same unworthy end, and cotemporaneously produces the greatest present evils; for amidst the fury of this sectional war, no important measure of a national character can obtain even a respectful hearing. As the roar of the tempest becomes louder, and the darkness thickens over the land, every noble principle, every time-hallowed institution, every generous aspiration of the human heart—Americanism, conservatism, Democracy—nay, the principles and practice of our most holy religion, must all bow heir faces in the dust, until the deadly sirocco hall have passed by.

At this very moment there are questions of the deepest interest wholly overshadowed by the black cloud of the slavery discussion. Time, the mighty innovator, has placed the nation in a new sphere of circumstances imperiously demanding the policy of new measures. Under the influence of the great democratic idea expressed by the word progress, territories ample enough for empires have been added to the original patrimony of the Union. A bright star of virgin gold glitters on the western border of our banner, as it waves over the waters of the Pacific ocean, from the Titan's flag-staff of the Rocky Mountains. But we need arches of iron, traversed by steam, and swept by electricity, to span the gulf of distance between the central Government and these remote possessions. We have advanced to the dignity of a first-class power among the sovereigns of the earth, and our commercial relations are wide extended as the world. By the revolution in the navigation of the ocean caused by the introduction of steam, we have been brought into immediate contact with the other hemisphere. The living, active Governments of this and of the Old World stand face to face with each other, and also with the worn out, dilapidated Powers, not only of both continents, but of the beautiful islands of Oceanica; and these, too, are to be regenerated by either one or the other—by the Anglo-American race, with all the vigor and vitality of free institutions; or by the different despotisms of Europe, eager to ingraft upon them the corrupt and tyrannical theories of the Old World. And hence may be inferred the urgent *desideratum* of an enlarged and comprehensive foreign policy, suited to such a state of circumstances; and this is precisely what the popular mind so vehemently demands, but which, in the mad rage of factions, is utterly denied us.

This treacherous folly and imbecility have been forcibly illustrated in a recent instance. The people of Nicaragua, in the exercise of their undoubted rights as a sovereign community, saw fit to change their form of government, and on the 13th of October of the last year they overthrew the serviles of the Chamorro faction, established a Republic, and appointed Patricio Rivas, a native-born citizen, as their President, and William Walker, a naturalized citizen, as commander-in-chief of their armies. Since that time there has been no revolution, nor attempt at revolution, neither insurrection nor rebellion, by the people of Nicaragua. Nor is the Government held by military rule. The President and his Cabinet are all natives. Granada, a city of four thousand inhabitants, is the headquarters of the army, while the executive and civil officers perform their functions at Leon, a city of nearly forty thousand people, distant a hundred miles from Granada, and entirely free from the presence of any American soldiers for the last three months. Indeed, no American troops are to be seen in any of the large towns, with the exception of Granada. The officers and soldiers in all the other cities are pure natives. The whole population of Nicaragua amounts to two hundred and seventy-five thousand; and it may be well doubted whether there be another people in the civilized world so unanimously agreed in the cordial support of their Government. There is absolutely no sectional strife or party discord among them. There is perhaps no military chief on the surface of the globe that possesses in a higher degree the confidence of his soldiers, and the citizens of his country, than William Walker. This new Republic of Nicaragua is located at the exact point where we most require an enlightened and liberal Government and friendly ally. It stands directly on the great highway to our Pacific possessions, where our sovereign citizens are passing daily.

Now, the people demand, and very properly

too, to know why the only political power in Nicaragua has not been recognized by the Federal Executive? A strange combination seems to have been formed against this new Republic. Malignant feeling and sinister opposition have been aroused, and kept alive, as if for the express purpose of giving time for British and French interference, to aid Costa Rica by arms and men in her crusade against Nicaragua; and, allow me to ask, for what end? There is no declaration of war—no pretended cause of quarrel against Nicaragua as a Republic; but it is a declaration of ruthless hostility against American citizens in the Nicaraguan service. This, sir, is the undeniable fact. And yet the infamous transaction is virtually countenanced and approved by the American Government; thus tacitly admitting the pretension, that our own people have no right to engage in the service of a foreign power. It is a war upon American citizens, merely because they are Americans, and by British soldiers carrying British muskets.

But, again, sir, look at the humiliation to which we are subjected by having our transit interrupted—our free passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific States of the Union! How mortifying is the fact to us as a nation, and how destructive of the rights and interests of our citizens! The Pacific gate to our western dominions is already closed against us by the Costa Ricans, who, in their thirst for American blood, have taken possession of San Juan del Sur; while San Juan del Norte, on the Atlantic side, is guarded by the batteries of British war ships, which subject all Americans desiring to enter that port to impertinent and arbitrary police regulations.

Mr. CADWALADER. I would inquire of the gentleman if he has authentic information to that effect? and, if so, of what character is it?

Mr. EVANS. I am in possession of authentic facts that the steamer Orizaba, in the act of transferring her passengers to the steamer of the Transit Company, was last month stopped by a British officer, and the passengers were not permitted to land until that officer was satisfied that they were not going to join General Walker. That information is now laid, as I understand, before the President of the United States.

Mr. CADWALADER. In authentic form?

Mr. EVANS. Yes, in authentic form, by Captain Tinklepaugh, of the steamer.

Mr. CADWALADER. I do not wish the gentleman to understand that I denied the correctness of his general statement. I wished to obtain as particular information as possible of the grounds on which he rested his belief of the fact which he has stated.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Chairman, no man can doubt but that all the bloodshed and riot in Central America is justly attributable to the failure or refusal of our present Administration to recognize the Rivas government in Nicaragua—a failure or refusal which should bring upon those having charge of the foreign bureau the disapprobation and censure of the American people. They now stand condemned by the judgment of the masses; and as under other Governments a Ministry that would thus abuse its power and prove recreant to the public trusts committed to its hands, would be degraded and dismissed, so should those under the existing American Administration, who have been guilty of such unnatural malfeasance in office, suffer a like penalty. The public voice demands it, sir. The people demand the retirement of Mr. Secretary Marcy, and the immediate recognition of the present Government of Nicaragua, Not only this, sir, but the American Congress has a high duty to perform. The representatives of the people in their legislative capacity should not only repeal, and abolish forever, the odious neutrality laws, but Congress should also reaffirm the Monroe doctrine, defining its meaning in terms too plain to be misunderstood even by British diplomatists. Let us do this, sir, and, my word for it, it will open up a bright era for constitutional liberty. This subject, however, Mr. Chairman, I propose, with many others, to discuss at an early day, and shall pursue it no further for the present.

Again, we are failing to take measures to perfect the communication with our Pacific possessions—to put our entire coast defense upon a war footing—to keep open our Isthmus transit, and the gates of the Caribbean sea and Gulf of Mexico.

We are failing to bring our Army and Navy up to the exigencies of the times, in view of the great struggle that is now approaching between the free institutions of our country and the despotisms of Europe for the protectorate of the decaying Governments of this continent and the isles of Oceanica; for the time is coming, and now is, when they must receive the blessings of our civilization and religion, or pass from us forever to the galling tyrannies of the Old World.

But still the factious parties of the caucus and convention ignore all these demands, and spend their time and splendid talents only in discussions of the slavery theme.

Sir, it is impossible to enumerate all the great wants of this enlightened nation. There has never been an age or people in the annals of time, that developed such lightning-like activities, and displayed such intense yearnings after social and political perfection, as those which we now witness. The grand and glorious democratic idea has arrived at the stage of a full popular recognition and appreciation. The dignity, the royal estate, and princely privileges of every man, woman, and child belonging to the American family are universally acknowledged. And now the materials of our progress are such as the sun of sixty centuries never saw before. With the best form of Government which the experience of all past time has been able to produce; with a power mighty as magic over the physical elements and subtile agencies of the natural world, which former years never so much as dreamed of; with the finest race in material development and mental vigor, with the brilliant blessings of education diffused universally, like sunlight in the air; with the most intellectual and highly cultivated women, the mothers—shall I not call them?—of the future; with a continent of unplowed lands; with lakes like oceans, and rivers large as seas, and with soaring aspirations for all that is beautiful or useful in art, profound in science and divine in religion—I say with all these the nation is prepared to start on a loftier career of improvement.

But to do this, the people must cashier their

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party leaders, and drive away into utter darkness all the demons of disunion and sectional strife—those that, like the unclean spirit of old, would enter into the heart of the Constitution only to throw it upon the ground and tear it in pieces. Every sovereign citizen must learn to assert his right, make his royal will obeyed, and become a potential legislator. Then every door of destiny will open at the popular bidding, and the race of progress will commence over all the fair fields of the future.

Standing on the strength of these great facts, it would be no difficult task to forecast the coming grandeur of American civilization. I should say, that with the wealth, learning, science, art, and experience of all the world, we would soon be the most refined and polished race that history has witnessed since the fall of man. But unless the religious sentiment be correspondingly developed and strengthened, so as to continue the cultivation and practice of all the Christian virtues, a spirit of luxurious enjoyment and more than eastern voluptuousness would gradually prevail, so as in the course of a few generations to enervate our posterity, and enfeeble their powers of volition until they would lose their control over physical causes, while the decline of their speculative faculties and moral emotions would render them, like the effeminate Asiatics, the fit subjects of either division or despotism—the prey of civil strife, or the victims for some *Tamerlane* of a future age. For universal experience proves, that without a religion, and a common religion, both for rulers and subjects—a religion founded on the love and fear of God, no nation can long flourish, or fulfill any exalted destiny.

The Bible, therefore, must travel the circuit of our civilization, keeping pace with the march of progress, as a guide and illumination in every path, in days of darkness, and in nights of storm. The sweet chimes of the church bell and the earnest tones of prayer must mingle with the piercing shrieks of the steam-whistle and the roar of iron-wheels. And it is precisely because the religious se... is as active and e... of hope. I believe lite... Church is the salt of the earth, ...lieve—I never will credit the mournfu... of measureless despair, that the millions of petitions from the lips and hearts of the pure and pious, from all the public and private altars in the land, ascending up to Heaven, morning and evening, and on every Sabbath, like holy incense, the precious perfumes of the soul, for the indestructibility of our glorious Union, will all prove unavailing.

But all such lofty considerations—everything is overlooked of late by the leaders of faction, save the issues forged by the machinery of conventions. You hear nothing but the wild battle-cries of slavery, slavery—all is slavery. In the mean time, the Pacific railroad, our foreign relations, and the shameless inefficiency of our Army and Navy, in the view of a great war against the most powerful nation on the globe, which must come sooner or later, are all forgotten. Better it were ten thousand times that an earthquake should rock the world like a cradle, and swallow up Kansas into the central fires concealed by the crust of the globe; better that the destroying angel of pestilence with fiery sword should sweep all the blacks from the fields of the South—nay, better, that the African race should become extinct at once, as it probably will be in the course of time—than to see the wreck of our civil and religious liberty, which all this strife and agitation are so terribly adapted to produce.

The last luminary of constitutional freedom, the last of all the ages, the last of all the lands, the solitary star in the mortal night of time, to which the oppressed nations of the earth may look for light and hope, the only ray of true Democracy trembles in the western sky. Oh! in the name of humanity, law, liberty, and religion, quench not that divine beam to leave the world in the darkness of despotism forevermore!

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